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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
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Exemption(s): _____
Declassify: () In Part (☒) In Full
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ROME FOR VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 12065: GDS 3/7/86 (FRIEDMAN, TOWNSEND B.) OR-P

TAGS: SHUM AR

SUBJ: (U) HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY - MARCH 1-7, 1980

REF: BUENOS AIRES 1795

[REDACTED] SUMMARY. THE OAS IAHRIC REPORT AND THE UNHRC MEETING IN GENEVA
CONTINUE TO RECEIVE MUCH ATTENTION IN ARGENTINA. THE GOVERNMENT'S
TACTICS FOR DEALING WITH THE IAHRIC REPORT MAY INCLUDE A FRONTAL ATTACK
ON ITS VALIDITY AND AN EFFORT TO GET THE OAS MINISTERIAL TO REJECT IT

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WE RECEIVED A NEW REPORT OF A DISAPPEARED PERSON, WHO WAS TAKEN IN

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NOVEMBER 1979, WHO SUBSEQUENTLY WAS ALLOWED TO VISIT HIS FAMILY. THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S REPORT ON CLANDESTINE CAMPS APPEARS TO US TO BE FUNDAMENTALLY ACCURATE, THOUGH ITS AUTHOR'S HAVE A QUESTIONABLE PAST, INCLUDING ALLEGATIONS OF CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THEIR CAPTORS WHILE UNDER DETENTION. END SUMMARY.

1. [REDACTED] THE OAS IAHRC REPORT----

THE GOA CONTINUES TO SHOW EVERY EVIDENCE OF CONCERN OVER THE IAHRC REPORT. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS ORDERED ARGENTINE AMBASSADORS TO OAS MEMBER COUNTRIES TO BUENOS AIRES WHERE THEIR MAJOR TOPIC OF THE DISCUSSIONS IS, REPORTEDLY, THE IAHRC REPORT AND THE GOA'S RESPONSE TO IT.

A USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE TOLD US THAT THE GOA HAD FAILED TO GET THE IAHRC REPORT CHANGED DESPITE A MAJOR LOBBYING EFFORT WITH THE COMMISSION MEMBERS. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, THE REPORT STILL CONTAINS THE NAMES OF EIGHTEEN MILITARY OFFICERS WHOM IT TIES DIRECTLY TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IT ENUMERATES. NOR DID THE COMMISSION MEMBERS AGREE TO HAVE THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT'S REPLY TO THE REPORT INCLUDED AS PART OF THE DOCUMENT.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT CLEARLY LAID OUT ITS TACTICS AND STRATEGY ONCE THE REPORT IS PUBLISHED, BUT THERE ARE SEVERAL INDICATIONS OF WHAT IT MAY DO. IT SEEMS TO BE DETERMINED TO ATTACK THE COMMISSION AND THE REPORT FRONTALLY, PROTRAYING THE FORMER AS BIASED, AND THE REPORT AS INCOMPLETE, DISTORTED AND FUNDAMENTALLY INACCURATE. THE GOA MAY ALSO BE CON-

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TEMPLATING AN EFFORT TO GET THE REPORT REJECTED OR REPUDIATED BY THE OAS MINISTERIAL, WHEN IT IS SUBMITTED TO IT LATER THIS YEAR.

THE IMPENDING PUBLICATION OF THE IAHRC REPORT IS ALSO ANXIOUSLY AWAITED HERE BY POLITICAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS WHOSE EXPECTATIONS HAVE BEEN NOURISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S VISIBLE PREOCCUPATION. THESE GROUPS SPECULATE PRIVATELY ON WHAT EFFECT THE REPORT'S PUBLICATION WOULD HAVE ON THE INTERNAL MILITARY BALANCE

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BETWEEN THE GOVERNING VIOLA-VIDELA FACTION AND THEIR COMPETITORS. NOT HAVING SEEN THE REPORT, WE ARE IN A POOR POSITION TO JUDGE THIS ISSUE. WE DO NOT DOUBT THAT THOSE MILITARY MEN WHO SEEK TO DERAIL VIDELA AND VIOLA WILL SEEK TO EXPLOIT THE PUBLICATION OF THE REPORT AGAINST THEM. AT THE SAME TIME WE SUSPECT THAT THE PRESIDENT, GENERAL VIOLA AND THEIR ALLIES, ARE WILLING TO EXAGGERATE THE THREAT FROM THIS QUARTER IN THEIR EFFORT TO MOVE THE IAHC AND OTHERS TOWARD ATTENUATING THE REPORT.

2. [REDACTED] A VISITING DISAPPEARED----

FOR SOME TIME WE HAVE HEARD VAGUE RUMORS OF AN INDIVIDUAL WHO WAS SEIZED BY SECURITY FORCES IN NOVEMBER 1979 AND, AFTER A SHORT PERIOD OF BEING DISAPPEARED, WAS ALLOWED TO CONTACT AND THEN VISIT HIS FAMILY LATER THAT YEAR. WE HAVE NOW TALKED WITH A [REDACTED]
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USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE WHO REPORTS THAT HE HAS BEEN IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE FAMILY OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN QUESTION. HE NATURALLY AND CORRECTLY FEELS HIS INFORMATION IS VERY SENSITIVE AND DOES NOT FEEL THAT HE CAN PROVIDE US WITH THE NAME OF THE MAN IN QUESTION. HOWEVER, HE CONFIRMS THAT THE MAN WAS SEIZED IN NOVEMBER AND WAS ALLOWED TO VISIT HIS FAMILY, SPENDING CHRISTMAS NIGHT AT HOME. AS IS USUAL IN SUCH CASES, THE FAMILY WAS WARNED BY THE MAN'S CAPTORS THAT THEY SHOULD INFORM US OF ONE OF THE VISITS. OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE 'VISITING DISAPPEARED' PHENOMENON IS THAT IT USUALLY INVOLVES INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN CAPTURED AND 'TURNED' AND ARE ALLOWED VISITS AS PART OF THEIR REWARD. IN THE PAST SOME OF THE VISITING DISAPPEARED HAVE BEEN FREED. OTHERS WERE EVENTUALLY KILLED BY THEIR CAPTORS. OUR SOURCE HAS PROMISED TO INFORM US IF THIS DISAPPEARED HAS CONTINUED HIS VISITS, HAS BEEN FREED OR HAS BROKEN OFF CONTACT.

(U) IMPOSTER DENOUNCED ARGENTINES TO SECURITY FORCES THEN COLLECTED FOR "HELPING"----

ACCORDING TO ARTICLES IN "LA PRENSA" AND THE "BUENOS AIRES HERALD" JUAN BATTAGLIA-PONTE, AN URUGUYAN, WAS [REDACTED]

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ARRESTED A SHORT TIME AGO IN NEW YORK FOR IMPERSONATING
THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR AND AN ARGENTINE ADMIRAL. THE
REPORTS STATED THAT BATTAGALIA-PONTE CARRIED OUT THESE
IMPERSONATIONS IN ORDER TO OBTAIN MONEY FROM PEOPLE IN
THE U.S. WHO HAD RELATIVES IN ARGENTINA. BATTAGLIA-PONE
WOULD FIRST DENOUNCE PERSONS IN ARGENTINA AS TERRORIST
AND THEN CONTACT THEIR RELATIVES IN THE U.S. UNDER THE
GUISE OF AMBASSADOR OR ADMIRAL TO DEMAND MONEY FOR THE
RELEASE OF THOSE HE HAD DENOUNCED. IT WAS PURPORTED
THAT ONE OF THE PERSONS DENOUNCED BY BATTAGLIA-PONE
DIED OF A HEART ATTACK AFTER HIS ARREST, AND THAT
HIS BURNT REMAINS WERE FOUND SOMETIME LATER.

[REDACTED] (THE LEGAL ATTACHE PLANS TO CONTACT HIS
[REDACTED]
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WASHINGTON OFFICE FOR INFORMATION ON THIS CASE -

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SPECIFICALLY INFORMATION ON WHETHER OR NOT ANY ARGENTINE OFFICIALS ARE COMPROMISED OR IMPLICATED.)

4. [REDACTED] A REPORT ON SECRET DETENTION CAMPS-----

WE HAVE NOW RECEIVED THE RECENT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON SECRET DETENTION CAMPS. DESPITE SOME LOGICAL INCONSISTENCIES, OCCASIONAL IMPROBABLE STATEMENTS AND THE AUTHORS' WILLINGNESS TO SPECULATE WITH AUTHORITY ABOUT SITUATION BEYOND THEIR PROBABLE KNOWLEDGE, IT STRIKES US AS A FUNDAMENTALLY ACCURATE REPORT BY TWO MEN WHO HAD BEEN THROUGH THE 'SYSTEM'. THE RECOUNTING OF THE TORTURE, SUMMARY EXECUTIONS AND OTHER BRUTALITIES REPEATS WHAT HAS BEEN PUBLISHED ELSEWHERE, BUT IN GREAT DETAIL AND FOR THE FIRST TIME CONCENTRATING ON THE ARMY AND THE POLICE'S ROLE. SOME ASPECTS ARE NEW OR REVEALING: E.G. THE STORY IT TELLS OF VISITING DISAPPEARED AND THEIR ULTIMATE EXECUTION BY THEIR CAPTORS, OR THE STRONG CASE IT MAKES (INCLUDING RECONSTRUCTIONS OF THE FORMS USED TO OBTAIN HIGHER AUTHORIZATION FOR OPERATIONS) THAT THERE WAS A WELL ESTABLISHED CHAIN OF COMMAND FOR MUCH OF THE SECURITY FORCES DURING THE 'DIRTY WAR'. MOREOVER, THE INCLUSION OF THE FULL AND ACCURATE IDENTITIES OF SOME OF THEIR CAPTORS UNDOUBTEDLY HAS CAUSED UNEASE AMONG PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY FORCES WHO FEEL THAT THEY TOO MIGHT BE SIMILARLY FINGERED BY PRISONERS. THE AUTHORS OF THE REPORT ARE MEN WHO PROBABLY WERE DEEPLY ENMESHED IN ANTI-GOVERNMENT TERROR AND WHO, DESPITE THEIR DENIALS IN THE REPORT, APPEAR TO HAVE COOPERATED CLOSELY WITH THEIR CAPTORS. THE TWO MEN OFFERING TESTIMONY, GONZALEZ AND CID DE LA PAZ, IN

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FACT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED BY FORMER INMATES OF THE CAMPS AS HAVING ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE INTERROGATION AND TORTURE OF DETAINEES, ACCORDING TO RELIABLE HUMAN RIGHTS SOURCES IN BUENOS AIRES.

5. (U) "COMMITTEE OF 25" ABSOLVED OF GUILT-----

A FEDERAL JUDGE PROVISIONALLY ABSOLVED SIX LEADERS OF THE FORMER "COMMITTEE OF 25" TRADE UNION GROUP FROM THE PRESUMPTION OF HAVING VIOLATED THE LEGAL BAN AGAINST STRIKES AS A RESULT OF THEIR EXHORTATIONS IN FAVOR OF A "NATIONAL DAY OF WORK PROTEST" APRIL 27, 1979. ACCORD-

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ING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, THE JUDGE RULED THAT, UNLESS NEW TESTIMONY DEVELOPED TO CONCLUDE OTHERWISE, THE "GENERAL" CALL FOR A STRIKE WAS MERELY "A PREPARATORY ACT" AND WAS NOT DIRECTED TO ANY WORKER IN PARTICULAR. THE JUDGE'S RULING SEEMS TO BE BASED ON AN OBSCURE AND GENEROUS INTERPRETATION OF THE FACTS IN THE CASE, BUT IT HELPS TO TIE A NEAT LEGAL BOW INASMUCH AS THE LEADERS HAVE BEEN OUT OF JAIL FOR MONTHS.

6. (U) "MORAL Y CIVICA"-----
THE CONTROVERSIAL PROBLEM OF THE "MORAL Y CIVICA" HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM CROPPED UP AGAIN LAST WEEK-THIS TIME ON A NOTE OF IMPROVEMENT. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE PROTEST OVER THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK "MORAL Y CIVICA" WHEN IT FIRST APPEARED EARLY LAST YEAR (SEE 79 BUENOS AIRES 4230) DUE TO ITS BLATANTLY PRO-CATHOLIC AND ANTI-JEWISH AND PROTESTANT VIEWPOINT. THE BOOK WAS TO PART OF THE SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM. IN THE PAST WEEK IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT "MORAL Y CIVICA" WAS TO BE REINTRODUCED INTO THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AFTER BEING REVISED. ACCORDING TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION THE PROGRAM HAS UNDERGONE A COMPLETE OVERHAUL AND "SHOULD NOT BE OFFENSIVE TO ANY SECTOR OF THE POPULATION". THE "BUENOS AIRES HERALD" IN AN EDITORIAL HOWEVER POINTED OUT THAT THE
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CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM IS NOT AS INTENSIVE AS THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION WOULD LEAD ONE TO BELIEVE. ACCORDING TO THE "HERALD", THE MINISTRY MERELY ADDED TWO BOOKS BY JEWISH AUTHORS AND ONE BY A PROTESTANT TO THE PROGRAM, BUT THAT THE "MORAL Y CIVICA" PROGRAM IN ITS PRESENT STATE CONTINUES TO HAVE A DEFINITE RELIGIOUS BENT.

7. (U) THE UNHRC GETS ATTENTION-----
ARGENTINE NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES HAVE DEVOTED A GOOD DEAL OF CONTINUING ATTENTION TO THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNHRC IN GENEVA. THE REPORTING OF EVENTS THERE HAS BEEN CONFUSION AND IT IS DOUBTFUL IF THERE IS ANY WIDESPREAD ARGENTINE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT PRECISELY TOOK PLACE. BUT TWO CLEAR MESSAGES RAN THROUGH ARGENTINE ACCOUNTS: THE FIRST WAS THAT THE GOA HAD PLAYED ITS CARDS WELL AND SCORED IMPORTANT VICTORIES OVER ITS OPPONENTS. THE SECOND WAS THAT

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THE SUG WAS ONE OF ITS OPPONENTS AND THE SOVIET UNION
AN ALLY. IN FACT ONE POPULAR NEWS MAGAZINE SPEAKS
OF THE "NEARLY ARESSIVE" STANCE OF THE US DELEGATION
REGARDING ARGENTINA AND THEN QUOTES AN ANONYMOUS GOA
SOURCE AS STATING THAT THE DELEGATIONS' "ACTIVITIES
DID NOT CORRESPOND TO THE AGREEMENTS REACHED BY BOTH
COUNTRIES ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL GOODPASTER'S MISSION
....."

8. (U) TRIALS OF ACCUSED TERRORISTS----

A FEDERAL JUDGE IN SANTA FE HANDED DOWN SENTENCES
RANGING FROM 3 TO 8 YEARS TO A GROUP OF 21 PEOPLE
ACCUSED OF TERRORISM. THE GROUP WAS COMPOSED OF
MEMBERS OF ERP AND PRT IN SANTA FE AND ENTRE RIOS,
AND HAD BEEN ARRESTED DURING AND BEFORE 1975. ALTHOUGH
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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A FEW OF THE NAMES WERE IN OUR HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD
CARDS NONE WERE "HIGH INTEREST".
CASTRO
[REDACTED]

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